

Louisiana Lore and Legends

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LOUISIANA LORE AND LEGENDS

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Written by Lynn Emery.

The Stories Behind My Stories

Being a Louisiana native, south Louisiana to be exact, I have a unique view of the supernatural. Unlike most of the other states in the country, here we view the paranormal as “normal”. Our culture incorporates belief in traditional religions. We’re not called “The Bible Belt” for nothing. Yet along with being faithful Catholics, Baptists, Methodists and other conventional religious dominations, our culture is infused with Native American and African spiritual traditions and beliefs. I grew up hearing about spells and whispered references that “something was put on her”. My elderly babysitter, a Creole from old New Orleans, taught me to burn the hair from my combs and brushes. Not only would I be vulnerable to spells, but mice and rats would use the hair to build their nests which would give me terrible headaches.

For the most part when I read about Louisiana voodoo or Marie Laveau in books, the authors typically write

a mixture of stereotypes and incorrect facts. That old cliché “Truth is stranger than fiction” applies. Naturally I don’t have enough space to give this topic the full attention it needs, so I’ll just provide a few tips from this Louisiana native Creole (mixture of African and Spanish descent).

You may have watched the popular television series *American Horror Story: Coven* set in New Orleans. Angela Bassett played Marie Laveau and Katy Bates played Madame Delphine LaLaurie. I watched and enjoyed the show, though it was pure fiction. Especially regarding these historical figures. So, let’s take a look at the real people behind the legends.

Marie Laveau



Artistic rendering of a New Orleans Creole woman

No known portraits of Marie Laveau exist

Marie Laveau perfected the art of creating a layer of fiction to disguise the truth of New Orleans voodoo. She was brilliant at PR, recognizing the value of creating a mystique for the public. She perfected the public performance of voodoo celebrations that helped her become a force in New Orleans, and even in state politics. Marie used her influence to in effect become one of the earliest feminist activists. In her time, late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, women had no rights. Once married, everything a woman owned then became her husband's property. He had complete control to manage it as he liked or even to sell it.

A husband could divorce his wife, but she couldn't get rid of him. Marie consulted with white and black women to help them gain some measure of control over their lives. She used a network of Creole freeborn servants, slaves and merchants to gather inside information. Her clients were convinced she used magic to learn all these secrets. Marie also used her brains and skills to free slaves. I highly recommend *Voodoo Queen- The Spirit-*

ed Lives of Marie Laveau by Martha Ward¹, a thoroughly researched and well documented account of the real story of this voodoo icon. In fact, you'll learn much about old New Orleans and Louisiana history.

Here are a few Marie Laveau tidbits:

There was at least two Marie Laveaus. The second was one of the original Marie's daughters. Marie the First was such a force, that for years many believed she lived a long life using the supernatural. Her daughter studied her mother's techniques and carried on after she died.

Marie the First, a free born woman of color, liberated slaves in a most ingenious way. She spoke only French. Many Africans captured came from countries that had been colonized by France. Marie would stroll by the slave market in what is now called the French Quarter. She'd speak French, and if a slave answered her, she would coach them on what would happen next. She'd then get

1. <https://www.amazon.com/Voodoo-Queen-Spirited-Lives-Laveau-ebook/dp/B003BRBCLU>

a friend to draw up an affidavit declaring that the man or woman was one of her relatives mistakenly taken captive. In this way, she convinced local authorities to free several slaves.

Legend has it that Marie the First caused the end of public executions in Louisiana. She was against the death penalty. The story goes that in the 1850s she attended the hanging of a man she felt had been wrongly convicted. As he stood on the gallows, Marie joined the crowd. Dark clouds gathered, the wind began to blow, and a huge thunderstorm raged. Authorities pressed on, and the hangman pulled the trap door from beneath the poor man's feet. He dangled, but then lightning flashed and the rope broke. The man survived the drop. Marie stood calmly watching as the storm lashed the crowd. The sentencing judge, prosecutor, and all male jury were so shaken they freed the man. Within a week or so, the governor declared there would be no more public hangings. Executions would be done at the prisons with only officials attending.

Marie's tomb continues to draw hundreds of visitors to St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 in New Orleans. Over generations hundreds if not thousands of gifts left there. People even come to request her supernatural help from beyond the grave. Unfortunately, her tomb was defaced repeatedly with graffiti by amateur occultists in the belief that Marie would grant their wishes. The practice has no basis in voodoo tradition and damages the historic and delicate tomb. The good news is preservationists have restored the tomb and access is now limited to visitors led by tour guides or those with family buried in cemetery.

The spirit of Marie Laveau appears in my novels *Dead Ahead*² and *Die Trying*³.

2. <https://books2read.com/u/bP5wWY>

3. <https://books2read.com/u/b5ZxeR>

Madame LaLaurie



Portrait of Madame LaLaurie

Marie Delphine McCarty LaLaurie was born in 1787, a time when New Orleans was still a Spanish colony.

Her wealthy parents had emigrated from France. She married Louis LaLaurie in 1825. She had several children from her two previous marriages. In owning slaves, Madame and Monsieur LaLaurie were like most of not all rich whites of their time. As described by other historical sources, harsh and even cruel treatment of slaves was sadly the norm. Yet in colonial Louisiana some acts against slaves were scandalous, even criminal. Two incidents branded Madame LaLaurie as a monster, a title that has endured for over two hundred years.

The first incident occurred when reportedly Madame LaLaurie beat an eight-year-old slave girl severely. The child ran up to the roof of the house and leaped to her death so escape her mistress. Accounts claim that neighbors called the police on hearing the child's agonized screams. They reported the child had died, but Madame LaLaurie denied anything unusual had happened. Yet police searched the premises and found the child's body in a well. Authorities determined that the LaLauries must sell their slaves because they violated local ordi-

nances against the mistreatment of them. Yet supposedly Madame LaLaurie got around this decree by having her friends and family buy the slaves. Then then transferred them back to her.

In 1834 a fire broke out at the LaLaurie mansion. Firemen and police broke in the put it out and found Madame's seventy-year-old cook chained near the stove, this reportedly to keep her at work no matter what. The woman begged them to rescue other slaves chained up in the attic so they would die in the fire. Once the first was put out and the slaves removed, their tales of Madame LaLaurie's cruelty were sealed as legend.

Historians say sensational journalism and local gossip succeeded in exaggerating the stories of how the slaves were tortured. For example, there is no documentation to support the story about the slave girl jumping from the roof to escape Madame LaLaurie. As usual, the details became more gruesome with each telling. And of

course, the more macabre the story became, the more newspapers and books were sold.

Today, the LaLaurie descendants defend their ancestor. They insist that the stories were the result of jealousy from those envious of the wealth, beauty, and social standing of Madame LaLaurie. They assert that she was no different from her peers of the time. In fact, they insist she was known as a cultured, gracious, and even kind mistress. That last part about her being kind is probably stretching it. Even where and when she died is a mystery, as is where she's buried. Some say she returned to France where she was laid. Yet there is a grave site in New Orleans, with stories that say she never left the city. This despite stories that she was driven out in disgrace, unable to endure public outrage and ostracism by New Orleans high society.

There are many books about Delphine and Louis LaLaurie. One that includes solid historical research to separate myth from reality is *Mad Madame LaLaurie: New*

Orleans's Most Famous Murderess Revealed by Victoria
Cosner Love and Lorelei Shannon.

Louisiana Voodoo

Voodoo as practiced in rural Louisiana is different from what you see as a tourist in New Orleans. Most of what you see as a tourist is just that, created for the consumption of “outsiders.” In rural Louisiana, in most of the state really, true voodoo practitioners are very secretive. They don’t advertise. You must find them only through their former clients, friends and relatives, who will first decide if you can be trusted to keep your mouth shut. Why? If others know about your spells or gris-gris then they will counteract them and thus render them ineffective. Gris-gris (pronounced “gree-gree”) are amulets for talisman used for good fortune or send misfortune to an enemy. The other reason is because we are The Bible Belt. They don’t want to feel the backlash of dabbling in what some consider witchcraft or sorcery. Ironically like the original Marie Laveau, most voodoo practitioners in Louisiana attend conventional churches regularly.

They believe in God, and considered themselves faithful Christians.

In the LaShaun Rousselle Mystery series, a psychic investigator and a deputy sheriff track down human and supernatural crooks. LaShaun comes from a long line of voodoo practitioners. She first appears as a secondary character in *Night Magic*¹. Later I made her the protagonist in her own series. LaShaun combines her ability to run down clues, voodoo, and paranormal skills to catch killers. Get in on the action in *A Darker Shade of Midnight*², *Between Dusk and Dawn*³, *Only By Moonlight*⁴, *Into The Mist*⁵, *Third Sight Into Darkness*⁶, and *Devil's Swamp*⁷.

1. <https://books2read.com/u/m0gJv7>

2. <https://books2read.com/u/b5rp6l>

3. <https://books2read.com/u/m2v8ad>

4. <https://books2read.com/u/4EyZBE>

5. <https://books2read.com/u/bppRA6>

6. <https://books2read.com/u/4XKv5N>

7. <https://books2read.com/u/bWROyM>

Le Cercle Harmonique

Spiritualism and séances became a global obsession from the 1850s through the 1870s. Famous people like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle along with regular folk fell under the spell of well-known mediums of the day like Florence Cook, Sister Louise and J. B. Valmour. What hasn't been given much attention is the history of spiritualism among Black Americans during Victorian times, particularly in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Henry Louis Rey (b. 1831) was born to a wealthy *les gens de couleur libre* family in New Orleans. In the 1850s, Rey embraced the spiritualist movement and studied under Sister Louise and Valmour. He soon formed his own séance circle called Le Cercle Harmonique. The members were men of African, French, and Spanish descent, though records indicate at least one woman became a member. The two primary mediums were Francois Dubuclet and Victor Lavigne. Records of the meetings

were documented in large register books over a twenty-year period. These séances unique had a unique goal. Unlike most of the sessions of their Caucasian counterparts, Rey and his associates had a very different aim. The typical séance involved those seeking to make contact with deceased loved ones for solace and comfort. Le Cercle Harmonique sought to gain spiritual guidance on pressing social and political issues of the day. In particular, they sought to advance the cause of civil rights and equality for people of color. They recorded messages from famous spirits such as Voltaire, Vincent de Paul, Abraham Lincoln, and Confucius as well as messages from family members of the spiritualist group. They also sought out martyrs like Nat Turner and John Brown who called for change in their lifetimes.

Meetings were documented noting the medium, the spirits contacted, and their messages in large registers. These journals were maintained for decades but most have been lost. Only one set remains, the René Grandjean Séance Register. Grandjean emigrated from France

in 1911 and became involved with members of the Creole Spiritual community. He translated the records, which had been written in French. The registers are housed in the Special Collections Department of the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans.

The Mystery That Is Louisiana

Louisiana changed hands a few times in our history. Although our state was a Spanish colony more years than France owned our territories, the French culture made a bigger imprint. Largely because the Spanish governors didn't permanently relocate to Louisiana. Most of them didn't move their families here either. When their appointments ended, they would move back to Spain. By contrast, large numbers of French planters were given land grants and remained, with subsequent generations born on Louisiana soil. Add in the migration of Acadians to rural areas, and French culture, traditions, and lore permeated the indigenous culture.

Still, Louisiana has its own unique brand of true crime stories, some of which will sound like lore. Throw in a big of supernatural, which comes natural of Louisiana natives, and you've got the recipe for a great story to tell. And sure enough, we love to pass on a good tale. When

you get together here and someone starts out with, “Did you ever hear about...”, settle in for a good time.

True Crime Louisiana Style



The French pirate **Jean Lafitte** made Louisiana his home in the eighteenth century. His favorite stomping grounds were New Orleans and the Barataria Bay area. In New Orleans, he and his brother Pierre ran a blacksmith shop. His pirate camp was in the wilds of the marshlands around Barataria Bay, a lawless area back then. He pretty much was the law in his camp. Lafitte also traveled in other areas of southern and coastal

Louisiana, establishing makeshift settlements as needed. Although the Lafitte brothers presented themselves as New Orleans businessmen, they also made fortunes from raiding ships, which included human cargo. They stole (and sold) slaves along with gold and other goods. As you can imagine, there are legends that Lafitte buried treasure in various parts of Louisiana. Why? Easy access if he was on the run or needed funds when he traveled. Kind of like his own network of bank branches. Here's where the supernatural comes in.

Legend has it that Lafitte and Pierre would take one or two of their men with them to hide their loot. Usually, the location was a remote area deep in the woods in and around swamps or bayous. Once the treasure was buried or concealed in some way, Lafitte would murder his accomplice. Not only to make sure his secret was safe, but also so that the restless ghost of the men would guard the gold. Other stories also say a fierce animal would be slaughtered as another kind of spirit to protect the treasure.

One final fascinating note about Jean Lafitte. He first created what later became the city of Galveston, Texas. He established a settlement on the island, some called it a pirate's kingdom, and named it Campeche. Lafitte appointed himself as the governor in 1819. In 1821 Lafitte, under threat, agreed to leave the island after an American schooner was sent to expel him. Reports say he and his men burned his home, Maison Rouge, and the rest of the buildings. He left with a vast treasure, his mulatto mistress, and their infant son. Lafitte died in 1823 after being wounded in battle when he and his crew attempted to raid a Spanish ship off the coast of Honduras. He was buried at sea. Or was he?

Rumors turned into legends claiming he had not died. One writer in 1940 said Lafitte changed his name and became a solid, prosperous middle-class citizen in Mexico who lived until the 1880s. There is no proof to support his theory. Stories of Lafitte's buried treasure in Louisiana persist to this day.

In *Third Sight Into Darkness*¹, LaShaun Rousselle is hired to find a missing treasure hunter who may have run afoul of one of Lafitte's ghostly security guards!

In the swamps of Calcasieu Parish, the legend of “**The Money Trees**” dates to the Civil War. The story goes that a couple of thieves called Si and Dudley made their living stealing gold and silver. They finally buried their loot, and carved symbols on trees in the swamps as a sort of map. Confederate soldiers finally caught up with Si and Dudley and they were hung for their crimes. Since then, people have searched for their stolen fortune. Some claimed it was found. Others claim they were close to the treasure because they saw ghostly animals that Si and Dudley killed and buried to guard their ill-gotten gains. No one knows for sure what happened to it, though many over the years tried to find the riches of these doomed villains.

1. <https://books2read.com/u/4XKv5N>



The Gothic Jail or “Hanging Jail” in DeRidder, La was built in 1914 in the Gothic style, the jail housed up to 50

prisoners at a time. It was considered an advanced prison structure since the cells had a wash basin, a toilet and a shower, except for the “Death Cell”. The outside of the jail looked like a mansion, but the inside was like dungeon. Dark, and gloomy, it was stifling hot in Louisiana summers and bone chilling cold in the damp winter season. The most distinguishing feature was the spiral staircase. Each cell was open to the stairwell. Prisoners could look down the opening to see prisoners being hung, which is where it got the moniker “The Hanging Jail.” In 1926 two men were hung for a gruesome crime. A year earlier they killed a cab driver. They beat him with a tire tool, stabbed him a screwdriver, and cut his throat. The brutality shocked the state. According to one story, they haunt the old jail still. A jailer once said the rope used in the hanging was kept in the room he occupied. He swore that the rope would be moved around while he was gone. He’d come back to find it in a different place. Another legend says a former jailer’s ghost can be seen standing on the front steps smoking a pipe and drinking coffee. The jail closed in 1984.

The Gothic Jail is open for tours Monday through Friday, and hosts haunted tours at night during Halloween. Netflix did a 3-D digital scan of the jail to use it in the horror movie “Eli” in 2019.



**Photo of Clementine Barnabet in a newspaper article of the
time**

The strange case of **Clementine Barnabet** seems to be the first documented case of a black female serial killer that I can locate in my research.

In 1911 Lafayette Parish was a rural, quiet place. That pastoral peace would be shattered by a series of brutal murders that left the black and Creole communities and local authorities reeling. The horrible details would haunt the population for years to come. Over a period of months, entire families were beaten to death in their own homes. The final body count ranged from seventeen up to twenty-nine victims. The killings soon spread to Texas. Again fathers, mothers, and all the children bludgeoned to death with axes that belonged to the families. All during the night with no witnesses. The murder scenes were always spattered with blood, torn flesh, and

brain matter. Terror made people look at their neighbors and even their own relatives with suspicion.

The facts of each murder were even more bizarre. In most cases cryptic bastardized Bible verses were left in blood at several scenes. In other cases, like the Felix Broussard, his wife, and three children, the bodies were laid out in a staged fashion. One newspaper report claimed the killer arranged another murdered family, Alexandre Andrus, his wife Mimi, and their two small children, in a way that resembled the Nativity scene. All told seventeen people died by the time the killer was caught. Yet as shocking as the murders themselves, the macabre account Clementine would horrify the public even more.

In November 1912, a ten-year-old girl spent the night with her uncle and cousins. She returned home to find her parents, three siblings, and a cousin dead. Like the other murders, the Randal family had been beaten to death with an axe. This time a suspect was quickly seized.

A woman was seen creeping about the Randall cabin the night of the murder, her gingham dress covered in blood and brains.

Clementine Barnabet, tall and lean, was nineteen years old at the time. The Civil War and Slavery were still living memories, she must have seemed the nightmare of whites who wanted the old way of life to remain. She was reported to be one-eighth black, spoke Creole French, and her religious beliefs were a tangle of Catholicism and West African tribal rites, or Voodoo. In the beginning of her interrogation, Clementine insisted she was innocent. Then she admitted that she took part in the murder of the Randall family as part of a Voodoo protection ritual. She named her brother and father as accomplices. Her story changed at least four times. By the time her trial began, she said her father, Raymond Barnabet, was innocent, saving him from a death sentence. The strange tale of their Church of the Sacrifice unfolded. The killings were reported to be carrying out some bloody mission of the church, which never became clear.

News reports claimed the members sought immortality by drinking the blood of victims. Other reports asserted they were carried out to punish the victims for violating a church doctrine. The church leader, Reverend King Harris was questioned, but accounts of what he said and any facts revealed as a result of his interrogation can't be found.

In any event, despite it seeming clear she couldn't have acted alone, only Clementine and her brother Zepherin went on trial. Though news accounts describe her behavior as bizarre, hysterical and her testimony rambling, doctors declared her sane. Some accounts say her brother was acquitted, others claimed he served a short sentence, but records confirm Clementine was convicted. In October 1912 she was sentenced to life in prison.

During the early part of the twentieth century the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana housed both female and male prisoners. This is where Clementine was sent in 1913 from the Lafayette Parish

jail. So, that's it then I thought. Clementine Barnabet, first identified black female serial killer in the United States of America died in prison. No. That isn't the end of her story.

Our local library has a digital database of scanned historical records of the Louisiana State Penitentiary. The prison has its own museum by the way, which I haven't visited but planned to after this research. I checked for records and found her! Imagine my shock when I saw that in April 1923 Clementine Barnabet was released by Judge C. Lee Kleinpeter. I couldn't find any notation about why she was released from so early or where she went after. I tried looking for her name online, including the 1900 and 1930 censuses. No luck. If she changed her name, which is likely, I may never be able to find out what kind of life she led after such an infamous history. I'll keep looking, that much is sure.

Strange as it seems, another serial killer was on the loose not long after the sensational case of Clementine Barnabet ended with her prison sentence in 1913.

Between May 1918 and October of 1919, the infamous **Axe-Man of New Orleans** supposedly murdered or maimed a dozen people. I say “supposedly” because the crimes are an enduring mystery. The perpetrator was never caught. A motive, never clear. All the victims were Italian grocers and their spouses. Speculation, fueled by bigotry, claimed the crimes were related to Italian gangsters. True the beginnings of what became known as the “Dixie Mafia” had begun to form in those days. Yet the police could never establish a link between the victims and the gangs. Despite the sensational theories in the newspapers at the time, no credible motive was ever established.

Here is what is known. The victims were all attacked at night in their own homes. Most lived behind their small neighborhood stores. There was no doubt an axe was the

weapon of choice. In all twelve people fell at the hand of the Axe-Man. The three people who managed to survive couldn't give a description of their attacker or remember any other details. And the killing spree ended as mysteriously as it began. With one strange twist.

On March 19, 1919 a letter was sent to the Times-Picayune from the Axe-man himself, or so the author of it claimed. The return address listed? Hell. The Axe-man claimed he was never seen because was invisible, a "demon, a spirit from the hottest hell." He went on to say he could visit mass murder on the city if he wished because he was a close associate of the Angel of Death. He proposed one way the citizens of New Orleans could save themselves. He would go on another rampage the following Tuesday, but as he was fond of jazz, he would spare anyone with a jazz band in full swing at the time he passed by. Hoax? No one knows. But I've read that jazz played in many a household into the early hours of the following morning.

The murders stopped as mysteriously as they began. To this day, the identity and motives behind the murders are still only speculation.

The Axe-Man's spirit is up to his deadly tricks in *Dead Ahead*², a Joliet Sisters Psychic Detectives mystery.

Now we jump forward in time for another strange case with hints of the supernatural. In 1991, Eric and Pam Ellender were found murdered in their home in Sulphur, Louisiana. Their infant daughter was nearby unharmed. A day later Baton Rouge Police arrested an eighteen-year-old man driving the couple's car. Three men with him were detained, Robert Adkins, Phillip LeDeoux, and Kurt Reese. Chris Prudhomme confessed under interrogation saying he had no remorse. In fact, he said he was glad he'd done it. Seventeen days later he hung himself in his jail cell leaving behind a cryptic suicide note

2. <https://books2read.com/u/bP5wWY>

claiming he alone committed the murder. The other men were released. Case closed. Not quite.

Huey Littleton, Pam's father and a private investigator, was sure that there was more to the case. He claims Chris Prudhomme was a member of a Satanic cult called "SKATERS" or Satan's Kids Against the Establishment. According to Littleton, a cult members girlfriend he interviewed said the cult members planned to burglarize the Ellender home. High on LSD, they ended up murdering them. The details became even more shocking. This witness said that the cult members had a party in the house with the two victims lying dead in another room. She joined them in doing more drugs and drinking. She swears she didn't know about the crime until she saw the news the next day. As Littleton continued to investigate, he was told that a videotape of the murders and showed that the Ellenders had been sexually violated after death. Another account said Chris Prudhomme was going to kill the baby but another cult member stopped him. Yet the police had serious doubts about such fan-

tastic details. Littleton lost credibility with authorities as he pressed on in his theories about the “SKATERS”. Indeed, it is a pretty incredible story. But his resolve must have had some impact, or maybe police were biding their time.

In 1995 the other three men were finally charged. Robert Adkins eventually pled guilty to two counts of manslaughter, the other two for accessory after the fact. All three served between two and four years in prison. As for the cult, authorities could find no evidence to support it ever existed. Folks in the know claim they just went underground after the spotlight of the crime.

Monsters & Myths of the Bayou

If you're ever in Louisiana and lose your car keys or misplace one of your socks, you just may have been pranked by a **Lutin**. Steeped in Cajun folklore, the gremlin-like Lutin is a spirit that enjoys playing tricks on people. The mythical troublemakers are said to be the spirits of babies who return to pester the living. The stories have their roots in Catholicism. Any unexplained mischief would be blamed on the Lutin. The little hobgoblins would run through houses knocking over things and breaking household goods. They loved to spread chaos. Stories say they'd leave behind tiny footprints as the only evidence.



The Cajun legend of the **fifolet** goes back generations. What are they? Ghostly lights that float just above the swamps and bayous of Louisiana. Some versions of the story say they are lost spirits. They lure those foolish enough to follow them deep into the swamp until they are swallowed up in bottomless sinkholes. The victims' souls become one of the fifolet. Another story says the

lights will lead to buried treasure but beware! Other stories say those lights are spirits that guard the loot. The glowing orbs will lead you away from the treasure to a horrible death in the swamps filled with sinkholes, gators, and cotton mouth snakes! At best you'll be led into twisting paths deeper in the wilderness and never find your way out again.



Not to be outdone by Big Foot and the Yeti, Louisiana has its own big hairy creatures. In fact, we have two versions. Maybe they're the Cajun cousins of Big Foot.

Between the East Pearl and West Pearl Rivers in southeast Louisiana lies Honey Island Swamp, a tract of bottom land that has caused many spooky stories due to a certain train wreck in the 20th century. Legend has it that a traveling circus was in the area. Their train crashed on the way to their next stop, causing them to lose a bunch of chimpanzees that interbred with the local alligator population. This led to the creation of the **Honey Island Swamp Monster**. He's seven feet tall with three-toed, webbed feet, and weighs close to 400 pounds. Its yellow reptilian eyes pierce through the night and its matted grey hair allows it to perfectly blend with its surrounding atmosphere. The first spotting of the monster was in 1963 by Harlan Ford who later returned to the area with a friend to get a cement casting of the creature's webbed, claw foot.

The Sabine Thing lives in the western part of the state near the Louisiana-Texas border. Those who claim to have seen him say he's over eight feet tall and five hundred plus pounds if he's an ounce. The Sabine Thing al-

ways stays close to the water in the swamps around the Sabine River, which crosses both states and empties into Sabine Lake. If approached, it will scream and throw rocks or other debris. Sightings of the Sabine Thing have been reported for over three hundred years, with stories first told by Native Americans who lived in the area long before Europeans arrived.



The legends about the **Rougarou** (or Loup Garou in France) arrived with the Acadians (from Canada) and with French settlers. The story varies, but in most cases like a werewolf, the cursed to become part animal, part

human. In many Cajun stories, anyone who does not follow the rules of Lent is punished by becoming a Rougarou, with the head of a wolf or dog and the body of a human. Other legends claim the cursed is turned into a rabbit or other animal. Still another variation of the lore says a Rougarou prowls the swamps or woods to attack Catholics who don't follow the rules of lent. Still another story says Rougarou can only be created by a witch, who frequently turned themselves into them.

So, how does the curse end? Again, there isn't only one version. Some say the curse lasts one-hundred and one days. Only after that much time has elapsed can the Rougarou pass the curse on by biting someone else, but he/she must draw blood. Others say the way to break the curse is for the Rougarou must draw the blood of another. The curse is then transferred and the Rougarou is set free. Once turned back, the former victim can never tell anyone where they'd been or what they had become. For those around them could never feel safe or be sure they

wouldn't turn back. At the very least, they would be forever shunned. At worse, killed.

Ghost Hunters in the Bayou State

We have real ghostbusters in Louisiana, mais yeah! I found a listing of over fifty-five paranormal societies in the state, which stunned even me! Here is a listing of paranormal investigators, in case you need ghostbusters: Louisiana Spirits¹

Learn More About Louisiana

1. <http://www.laspirits.com/>

Follow these links to learn more about Louisiana, our culture and other people, places and things mentioned in this story:

[History of the Cajuns](#)²

[Creoles of Louisiana](#)³

[Zydeco](#)⁴

I created the small town of Beau Chene in Vermillion Parish. My fictional creation is more a cross between New Roads, Louisiana⁵ and New Iberia, Louisiana⁶. Here you can read the history of the real area called Beau Chene⁷.

2. <https://www.lafayettetravel.com/explore/what-is-cajun/>

3. <http://www.lacreole.org/>

4. <https://www.louisianatravel.com/music/articles/zydeco-music-louisiana>

5. <http://www.newroads.net/>

6. <http://www.cityofnewiberia.com/site.php>

7. <https://bchoa.org/about-beau-chene/history-and-location/>

I have woven these tales and much more Louisiana legends in two of my supernatural mystery series. Get more about our food, music, culture, and mythology along with whodunit plots as sleuths catch killers.

[LaShaun Rousselle Mysteries](https://www.lynnemery.com/lashaun-rousselle-mysteries)⁸

[Joliet Sisters Psychic Detectives](https://www.lynnemery.com/joliet-sisters)⁹

8. <https://www.lynnemery.com/lashaun-rousselle-mysteries>

9. <https://www.lynnemery.com/joliet-sisters>

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<https://books2read.com/r/B-A-YISG-ZYDX>

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Dr. Zen Mystery

The Lodestone Puzzle

The In Situ Murders

The Titan Paradox

Joliet Sisters Psychic Detectives

Smooth Operator

Hunting Spirits

Dead Wrong

Dead Ahead

Die Trying
Spirited Sisters

LaShaun Rousselle Mystery

A Darker Shade of Midnight

Between Dusk and Dawn

Only By Moonlight

Into the Mist

Third Sight Into Darkness

Devil's Swamp

Blood Bayou

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Triple Trouble Mystery

Best Enemies

Devilish Details

Pretty Dangerous

Standalone

After All

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A Time to Love

One Love

Sweet Mystery

Night Magic

Good Woman Blues

Gotta Get Next To You

Soulful Strut

Tell Me Something Good

Tender Touch

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About the Author

Mix knowledge of voodoo, Louisiana politics and forensic social work, and you get a snapshot of author Lynn Emery. Lynn has written over twenty novels so far, one of which inspired the BET made-for-television movie *AFTER ALL* based on her romantic suspense novel of the same name. Holly Robinson Peete and DB Woodside starred as the lead characters.

Her romantic suspense titles have won and been nominated for several awards, including Best Multicultural Mainstream Novel by Romantic Times Magazine.

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